

Government Working Group Meeting

Back River TMDL IP & Poquoson River and Back Creek TMDL IP

December 10, 2014

Meeting Notes

Location: Sandy Bottom Nature Park, 1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA

Start: 8:30 am

End: 10:00 am

Meeting Attendees:

Ashley Hall – EEE Consulting on Behalf of VDOT, Emily Drahos – EEE Consulting on Behalf of VDOT, David Kuzma – Newport News, Joe DuRant – Newport News, Dana Gonzalez – VADEQ Tidewater Regional Office, Mac Sisson – VIMS, Jian Shen – VIMS, Rob Gourley – Hampton Public Works, Liz Scheessele – Timmons Group, Connie Bennett – York County, Brian Woodward – York County, Joe Brogan – York County, Ellen Roberts – Poquoson, Andy Gurkin – Dandy Haven Marina, Christine Ausink – Hampton, Allison Watts – Newport News, Angela Rivas – Hampton, Jill Sunderland - HRPDC

I. Agenda Item: Septic Tanks

Discussion: A brief overview of the septic tanks included in each of the TMDLs was given. Locality reps were asked if these numbers were still accurate. York County likely has updated septic numbers as well as plans for where homes will be connected to the sewer. Hampton has a map of septic systems, most of them are in Harris Creek and some are in Riverdale. Poquoson has about a dozen septic tanks, but they are in areas that cannot be hooked up. It was requested that the localities send updated data about septic locations, areas that can still be considered for hooking up to sewers, details about pump-out programs and funding, and details about future septic related projects in each of the localities by the end of January 2015.

II. Agenda Item: Pet Waste

Discussion: Information about current locations of pet waste stations and the parties responsible for maintaining them was requested. In addition, it was requested that any plans for additional pet waste station locations and any current and future pet waste education program details be submitted by the end of January 2015.

Localities were asked about the locations of dog parks in the watersheds. Hampton has one near the Sandy Bottom Nature Park, but that might drain to the James River. They also have one at Ridgeway Park, which drains to the Hampton River.

Workgroup members noted that it would be worthwhile to reach out to SPCAs, animal shelters, and animal control in the watersheds. These groups could give out pet waste educational materials and pet waste bags. Hampton already supplies some shelters with pet waste kits.

III. Agenda Item: Education Programs and Public Participation

Discussion: Information on ongoing education programs, current sources of funding and plans for future education were discussed. Several workgroup members pointed out that wildlife education would be very important. Many of the localities lack the funding to enforce prohibition of wildlife feeding, so it would be important that the general public understands how feeding wildlife impacts water quality. A discussion about whether or not oiling geese eggs would be appropriate in the watershed began and it was noted that Geese Peace is a group that trains and organizes volunteers to oil resident geese eggs. Newport News pointed out that it may be helpful to look at wildlife mapping plans at regional airports (Williamsburg) and Langley Air Force Base.

Workgroup members recommended many organizations that could be asked to participate in the implementation planning process. These include, chicken keeper organizations (Peninsula Chicken Keepers), Geese Peace, angler/fishing associations, property manager associations, and horse/pet enthusiast groups. It was recommended that if the localities think of anyone who can be added to the email list, they forward meeting information along to them, better participation in planning will likely result in improved implementation.

IV. Agenda Item: MS4 Boundaries

Discussion: The localities were asked if they still agreed with the urban acreages assigned in the TMDLs. No one had any notable objections to the urban acreages included.

Newport News representatives pointed out that Brick Kiln Creek should not be included in Newport News' portion of the TMDL because it empties into the Bethel Reservoir, which is not impaired. They also noted that they would like the plan to acknowledge the sanitary sewer maintenance and upgrade activities that they have accomplished in the watershed.

Poquoson noted that the Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge should be removed from the Poquoson totals.

V. Agenda Item: Other

Discussion: The workgroup noted that it would be important to ensure that there are sufficient boat pump-outs in the region. Poquoson reported that they have a blueways map with pump-out locations noted and that they have several free pump-out locations for their citizens. It was also noted that HRSD has a portable pump-out program and that VDH already has a fairly extensive pump-out education effort in the region.

Hampton suggested that they could potentially add signage explaining boat pump-out options and procedures at public boat ramps. They already have 15 locations with litter signage, so this might be fairly easy to implement. It may be worthwhile to do some type of boater pump-out promotion at boating events in the watershed.

The group was reminded of the types of data/maps being requested by the end of January 2015. An additional meeting to regroup will likely be held in February or March.